

Department of Planning and Development

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UDP Committee
Councilmember Richard Conlin
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Diane M. Sugimura

DATE: January 8, 2007

SUBJECT: DPD Monthly Update: January 10 Committee Briefing

To wind up the year, we will soon be forwarding four SLI responses to the UDP Committee: 1) Annual Report from the City's Green Building Team, 2) quarterly report on Central Waterfront Planning, 3) quarterly report on Permit Review Time Reporting, and 4) quarterly report on Housing and Zoning Enforcement Complaint Reporting. These memos will include more details on each topic.

Summary of Permit Activity

This past year has been a record-breaking year in terms of development activity. As you may recall 2005 was the biggest year ever in terms of permit activity – construction permit intake value passed the \$2 billion mark. However, 2006 greatly surpassed with more than \$3 billion in intake value. By the numbers:

Master Use Permits = 1,111 (806 in 2005)

Design Review projects = 125 (70)

All construction-related permits (building, electrical, boiler, conveyance, mechanical, signs, side sewer and refrigeration) = 35,000 (31,000)

All development related inspections = 116,000

It has, of course, been a challenge keeping up with this unanticipated workload. We appreciate your support for the additional staff in the fall of 2006. We've filled more than two-thirds of the new positions, and the rest are in process. In terms of our turnaround targets, we are still managing to be pretty close to our target for simple/48 hour projects. The challenge has been with the complex projects which are targeted to have 70% of initial reviews completed in 6 weeks. For 2007, we are adding a third 'tweener' category for 2 weeks for initial review. This will more accurately reflect the types of projects we receive. The 2-weekers had been included in the 48 hour category, making it difficult to meet our 48 hour goals. However, they weren't



really 6 week projects, consequently we didn't want to put them in that category either. We believe this will help us more accurately reflect how we are doing in terms of meeting our targets.

Code Compliance Activities

Condo Conversions: In 2006, we received requests to inspect more than 2,300 rental housing units for condominium conversion, as shown in the chart below. We will continue to monitor condo conversions and to report periodically on the level of activity.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2004	32	30	53	16	22	46	123	61	0	31	13	3	430
2005	0	102	14	51	7	300	130	14	538	142	109	144	1551
2006	97	104	340	98	436	137	167	337	47	359	88	112	2352

We are also continuing to follow the state legislative proposal to amend the Condominium Conversion Act. The draft currently being circulated for comment would:

1. Eliminate the statutory cap of \$500 on relocation assistance (leaving it to local government discretion on what the cap should be);
2. Provide that the local government may develop and implement a relocation assistance program, as determined by the local government;
3. Increase the notice provisions from 90 to 120 days;
4. Require the property owner to disclose availability of relocation assistance, and to disclose the terms and condition under which it will be paid to a tenant as part of the Condominium Conversion Notice. (Currently there is no requirement to notify the tenants that assistance is available and how they can apply for it); and
5. Provide that a developer cannot begin any construction to convert the building during the 120-day notice period (in order to address concerns that the construction process is overly disruptive for current tenants. This provision is not intended to prevent normal maintenance for the up-keep of the building for existing tenants; the intent is to prevent only conversion-related construction during the notice period.)

Update on Crest Trailer Park: The trailer park closed on schedule at the end of October; all of the tenants were successfully relocated and the property transferred to new owners who are planning a mixed use development for the site. The trailers and other debris on the lot have been removed and the former laundry and motel building, which had been difficult to keep secured, has been demolished. A fence has been installed around the site in the hopes of preventing illegal entry and dumping.

Rainier Billiards Site: This property, located at 5101 Rainier Ave. S. and the site of a billiard hall and restaurant, was confirmed to have several violations, including use of a recreational vehicle/travel trailer as living quarters, several inoperable vehicles, materials stored outdoors (including furniture, wood, tires, metal, appliances), and noncompliance with permit conditions (paving and striping of the parking lot) and expired permits. The compliance date was set for November 30; the owners have not cured the violations. We have referred this case to Law for a penalties action.

Arcadia Houseboat Rentals: Over the summer we issued a violation notice in response to a complaint concerning a bed and breakfast operation on several vessels moored at 2040 Westlake Ave. N. This overwater commercial lodging use is not allowed and appears to have recently been discontinued. DPD received about 25 letters or emails from customers expressing their disappointment that our shoreline regulations did not allow for such a use.

Planning

South Downtown: The Livable South Downtown project is on schedule to complete a full legislative package for Council's consideration by the fourth quarter of 2007. Significant funding was received in December 2006. This will allow work on the EIS to accelerate, with an expected completion date for the Draft EIS in April of this year. The South Downtown advisory group met in December 2006 to discuss public benefits associated with future development. The group will meet again during the first quarter of 2007 to continue this discussion, and to provide feedback on heights in the South Downtown planning area. Ongoing efforts include: zoning and land use analysis, a transportation study, visual analysis of future heights, study of economic development issues in Little Saigon and Chinatown/ID, analysis of sustainability-related issues, and urban design work.

Dravus Commercial Area: Work on the Dravus area rezone has focused on two critical pieces of analysis that must be complete before a recommendation can be forwarded to City Council: Public Benefits and Transportation Financing. A preliminary economic analysis of the proposed development has been completed, and was shared with Interbay Neighborhood Association (INA) on November 16 and again on January 4. The purpose of these meetings was to review methodology and test assumptions about development costs in the W. Dravus neighborhood. DPD is currently working with the Office of Housing to develop a specific public benefits package. This will be complete 1st Quarter 2007.

Redevelopment of the W. Dravus Commercial area includes two sets of transportation improvements. The first set is required to mitigate adverse impacts on the transportation system that redevelopment will generate. The second is a set of INA proposed streetscape improvements. Currently DPD is working with SDOT and City Light to develop detailed cost estimates for both sets of improvements. This work was delayed pending submittal of a streetscape plan by the INA which was received by SDOT the week of December 10.

SDOT is also undertaking a Local Improvement District feasibility study to determine if the proposed redevelopment of W. Dravus would support an LID capable of financing both sets of transportation improvements.

Northgate Design Charrette: Councilmembers Clark and Steinbrueck attended a successful December design charrette focusing on Northgate Phase 2 (the area surrounding Northgate Way). DPD and OPM are preparing a visual and narrative summary of the charrette to frame discussion of the next steps for land use and planning in Northgate. These reports will be in final draft for the Stakeholders February 27 meeting. SDOT will provide their first annual report to Stakeholders on the Northgate CTIP improvements this spring.

Annual Landslide Workshops

Two Saturday sessions were held, one on November 18 at North Seattle Community College, and the second on December 2 at South Seattle Community College. The events are free to the public; attendees are always very appreciative of the informative sessions. These events include experts from DPD, SPU, Parks and SDOT as well as outside experts from the engineering and arboriculture professions. This is the 8th or 9th year the City has sponsored these events, which allow owners of landslide prone property to learn more about the causes of landslides as well as best practices for their property. It appears they were timely.

Workforce Housing Speaker Series

We have been working with the Office of Housing on a speaker series on workforce housing. These will be co-sponsored by ULI Seattle. We're excited about our kick-off speaker, Henry Cisneros, who will be speaking the evening of February 15 in the Bertha Landes room. He's a very knowledgeable as well as compelling speaker on this subject matter. He is involved with both a non-profit and a for profit housing development and investment companies that concentrate on home ownership opportunities for working families.